



More than 100 DC Schools Have Taken Steps to Serve Free Meals to All Students

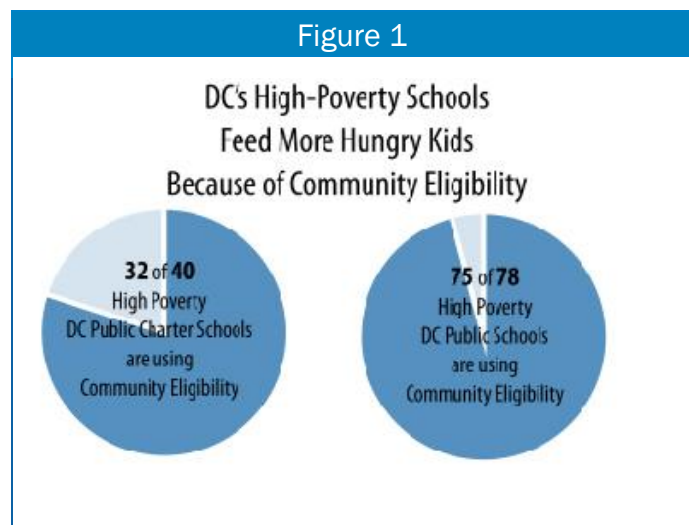
By Soumya Bhat

Some DC neighborhoods have child poverty rates over 50 percent, which means some of our schools may find a huge number of students coming to school hungry. That makes it difficult for students to learn and for schools to succeed. The good news is that over 100 DC schools are taking advantage of a new federal option that makes it easier for students in high-poverty DC schools to get access to school meals. See our press release with DC Hunger Solutions [here](#).

This school year, an impressive 75 of 78 eligible DCPS schools are taking advantage of the “community eligibility option,” which allows schools with very high percentages of low-income students to provide free breakfast and lunch to all students without collecting school meal applications. And 32 of 40 eligible public charters are using this option.

Schools and families benefit from the community eligibility option. It increases participation in the school meal programs, so that more students eat nutritious meals and are prepared for class. Getting rid of the administrative burden of collecting paperwork allows schools to focus on other priorities. And universal access within a school means that our most vulnerable students won't have to face any stigma that may be associated with participating in a free breakfast or lunch program.

Figure 1



Stay tuned for more budget updates from the District's Dime soon!